



South Mountain Corridor Study Citizens Advisory Team Meeting Summary

Date: November 3, 2005
Time: 5:30 p.m.
Location: District 6 Komatke Center, Learning Center Meeting Hall

CAT Members Attending:

Rock Argabright, Ahwatukee Foothills Chamber of Commerce
Laurel Arndt, Ahwatukee Foothills Village Planning Committee
Kris Black, Ahwatukee Foothills HOA
Steve Boschen, Valley Forward
Jim Buster, Avondale
Clayton Danzeisen, Maricopa County Farm Bureau
Peggy Eastburn, Estrella Village Planning Committee
Doris French, Laveen Village Planning Committee

Michael Goodman, Phoenix Mountains Preservation Council
Don Jones, Southwest Valley Chamber of Commerce
David Lafferty, Tolleson
Nathaniel Percharo, I-10 Pecos Landowners
Laurie Prendergast, Laveen Citizens for Responsible Development
Michelle Pulich-Stewart, Sierra Club
Jim Strogon, Kyrene Lagos Elementary School
Anthony Villareal, GRIC District 6
Dave Williams, Knight Transportation/AMTA

Staff and Consultants:

Jack Allen, HDR
Mike Bruder, ADOT
Matt Burdick, ADOT
Kelly Cairo, GCI
Chris Clary-Lemon, HDR
Ken Davis, FHWA

Amy Edwards, HDR
Ralph Ellis, ADOT
Theresa Gunn, GCI
Bob Hazlett, MAG
Don Herp, City of Phoenix
Dan Lance, ADOT

Scott Mars, HDR
John Roberts, GRIC
Roger Roy, MAG
Ben Spargo, HDR
Bill Vachon, FHWA

Citizens:

Brian Brumeier
William Eastburn
David Folts
Ross Kloeber
Jan Lane
Paul Lane
Larry Lee

Peter Lesio
Dean Lort
Doug Murphy
Laurel Nixon
Rich Nixon
Kent Oertle
Lisa Percharo

Corinne Purtill
William Ramsay
Joy Rockwood
Mark Schwartz
Dave Swisher
Kelly Zuk

ACTION PLAN

Task/Activity	Who	When
Provide CAT members with copy of letter from Doug Lingner to District 7 residents.	Theresa Gunn	Next comment packet sent to CAT
Update the Water Resources Report to include well mitigation information discussed in the 24th Street area.	Amy Edwards	Prior to CAT evaluation in January
Provide suggestions regarding the format of the summaries.	Interested CAT members	ASAP

Welcome and Introductions

Theresa Gunn welcomed attendees and explained that comments from public attendees are accepted in writing, and if possible, responses provided. She explained that all questions previously asked by the public will be addressed, and to please focus on new questions.

Gunn noted that ADOT and FHWA were seated with the CAT in order to allow better access to these individuals and allow for opportunities to respond to questions. She asked the CAT members if they had any concerns about this change. The CAT was supportive of this change. CAT members and staff introduced themselves.

CAT Member Questions and Comments:

Comment: People at the Ahwatukee Village Planning Committee meeting spent a good deal of time discussing the importance of a below grade freeway, and brought up an October 2003 presentation from the study team in which this option was discussed. They feel ADOT has ignored their request for a depressed freeway.

Comment: I have been working to encourage people to attend the upcoming public meetings.

Comment: The I-10 Pecos Landowners will be having additional discussion about the freeway at our November 12th meeting and may have more comments to provide. Can we get the current newsletter at the district offices? **Response:** We are working with the Gila River Indian Community to determine the protocol in distributing the newsletter. We do have copies prepared to provide to the Community.

Comment: People have said they want access to the detailed maps that are available to the SMCAT. **Response:** The maps are changing. Once we have a better draft, we will make them available on the website.

Question: What about the information regarding the Nevada case as provided by the Sierra Club? **Response:** We forwarded the information to ADOT and FHWA and it is under review.

Comment: I am very concerned about the letter from Councilman Doug Lingner to Phoenix residents in District 7. There is a lot of one-sided information, and some misrepresentations. The letter suggests that people return the comment form with a 55th Avenue preference to his office. The CAT needs to see this letter. **Response:** We will add the letter to the next CAT information packet.

Question: Has ADOT already acquired preserve land? **Response:** No.

Question: Given that there is a lot of private land in the north ridge area, has GRIC ever considered purchasing it? **Response:** We don't know.

Comment: I am getting several calls from citizens who know that I am on this advisory team.

Comment: There are inaccuracies in the Lingner letter about loss of business zoning. I think that all of these comment forms should be discounted, since they are being returned to his office, and since the response are tainted by propaganda.

Gunn noted that she has been contacted by CAT members regarding going over the same information at meetings, and other calls about going too quickly. She encouraged CAT members to feel free to challenge the process during meetings. Gunn asked CAT members to try to limit comments to issues regarding the reports and to write down other comments and questions on index cards.

Project Update

Ralph Ellis reviewed issues that he would like the CAT to consider in reviewing upcoming technical presentations. He said that HDR must establish a footprint for the sake of preparing the Environmental Impact Statement and that the process must keep moving forward. The footprint should not be considered pure design; rather, it is for the ability to study impacts.

Amy Edwards reviewed follow up items from the last CAT meeting. Based on public input, the project team is doing more analysis on depressed freeway locations where feasible. In addition, ADOT is considering the City of Phoenix preference to not have a 32nd Street interchange. While the footprint at the public meetings in November will continue to show this interchange, there will also be an inset that shows the area with a 32nd Street interchange.

In response to questions regarding the W101 options, Chris Clary-Lemon handed out a map showing insets of all seven options.

Video and Technical Report Review

The video flyover was used to assist in the review of the six technical reports and stopped at various points for detailed discussion. Reports reviewed included floodplains, prime and unique farmlands, jurisdictional waters, energy, geotechnical, and water resources. CAT members were asked to point out areas of interest.

CAT Member Questions and Comments:

Question: What level is I-10 at Guadalupe considered? **Response:** That section of I-10 is considered at-grade.

Question: The Santan is depressed, how is it drained? **Response:** There are pump stations and retention basins. These features lift water from the depressed freeway section. If the retention basin overflows, the water goes into the Gila River.

Question: Please explain some of the features on the flood plain draft map. **Response:** The blue lines are a drainage channel or feature; the numbers are reference numbers from Flood Insurance Rate Maps.

Comment: At 32nd Street, south of Pecos, there are private plans with GRIC for residential development.

Question: Wouldn't there be problems with water rushing under Pecos? **Response:** Given the current design of the freeway at-grade or elevated, if there was a freeway, it would only need to provide for the ability to remove water falling on the roadway surface. We are also working with GRIC regarding drainage issues.

Question: The well report doesn't explain the wells in the 24th Street area used for local lakes. It basically says, "We will try to build you a well." That isn't good enough.

Response: We know that drilling a well isn't a guarantee. In preparing an EIS, we often say mitigation will be developed later. The summary prepared for you should not have overlooked this issue. Options if a well should be dry include: getting water from elsewhere; using directional drilling; or, building a vault under the freeway that allows access to an existing well.

Question: Do you have a cistern to accommodate one million gallons of water per day?

Response: We would need to leave enough room to get the water out. **Reply:** This would be an unforeseen cost in building a freeway, yet other costs seem very important.

Comment: You need to take responsibility to make sure there is more information than, "we will take care of this." **Response:** Yes, we will change the report to reflect the issues discussed. Also, there is a level of contingency in cost.

Question: How do you mitigate issues such as removing some apartment buildings in a complex, but not others in the same complex? **Response:** This will be addressed in another technical report.

Comment: At 17th Avenue, SRP will be adding a substation. **Response:** This will be addressed in the utility report.

Comment: A 27th Avenue intersection, versus 25th Avenue, would affect a lot more homes. **Response:** The 27th Avenue option will be shown as an inset on the maps at the public meeting.

Comment: In the Ivanhoe area, it seems logical to leave one of the washes as a wildlife corridor. **Response:** We attempt to leave washes where they occur naturally where possible. This would be designed at the 30 percent design point.

Comment: There is a problem with floodplains and habitat if the freeway is depressed. **Response:** Please remember that this design is for study purposes.

Comment: The level of information in the technical report doesn't give enough information, such as the fact that a flood plain is a natural feature (please see card).

Response: CAT members can contact us for the full report, or call for more information.

Question: What if rerouting water moves earth as well, or reveals gravesites?

Response: ADOT follows federal guidelines on these issues. Project work stops, archeology work and recovery occur. Regarding drainage, we try to maintain current flows as much as possible.

Question: How could the cut slope on South Mountain be minimized? **Response:** Using the information we have at this point, the area seems to be a standard rock cut. There are options, such as using a rock fence.

Comment: There is not enough information in these summaries. You have information gathered from utilities and this should be included.

Comment: At 55th Avenue, south of Lower Buckeye, it looks as if ADOT did not buy enough right-of-way. **Response:** Design assumptions have changed.

Question: When did ADOT buy that strip of land? **Response:** We don't know.

Question: Why are certain buildings shown in the right-of-way, and others not – such as two of the six petroleum tanks in the right-of-way? **Response:** At impact analysis, we may determine that the two petroleum tanks should remain.

Question: What about the railroad tracks? **Response:** The span would be over the spur tracks.

Question: What if there was no Van Buren interchange, would the railroad be unaffected? **Response:** Railroads are considered a utility and will be discussed further in that report.

Comment: What is the vertical profile in this area? **Response:** South of Buckeye, the profile begins to elevate to meet I-10 and it stays above the railroad.

Comment: I am concerned about the wells in the footprint. **Response:** In this case, the wells are not water producing wells and are not a significant concern. **Reply:** This would be useful information, and this type of information would be useful in other reports too.

Question: In the W71 alignment (photo overlay from video), what is width of the right-of-way in the Santa Maria area? It looks smaller than that of the area north of the Salt River. **Response:** These types of issues are addressed in the design memo sent to the CAT. This is an issue of visual perspective given the oblique angle of the photo overlay from video.

Question: Why are there so many more acres shown in some areas (see card)?

Response: Due to topographical differences, the floodplain is wider where it crosses the Salt River.

Question: What about the question of interchanges? **Response:** Any interchange could be eliminated. This is an ADOT and local jurisdictional decision.

Question: Will you shrink the floodplain area and attempt to change Mother Nature?

Response: We are looking at just going over the Salt River. There are guidelines regarding flood plains.

Question: You keep alluding to future design documents. When are these coming, and when will the CAT have the opportunity to comment on these? **Response:** The future design documents would come after the final EIS. It is up to ADOT to decide how it will pursue the collection of additional public input. We are asking the CAT to consider these design concepts.

Question: Does the right-of-way go around the Sax Webster Farmhouse? **Response:** Yes.

Question: Whose responsibility is it to deal with archeological finds? **Response:** We will add a cultural report summary that includes this type of information.

Question: With the expansion to Tolleson High School, will it be considered 4(f)?

Response: The ball fields that are open to the public would be the only area considered 4(f).

Clary-Lemon asked the CAT if they found the video presentation beneficial. There was agreement that this was an extremely helpful tool in understanding the areas under study.

Public Meetings

Gunn reviewed the public meeting schedule, which will include meetings from noon-8 p.m. on November 15, 16, and 17. Presentations will run as needed throughout the day. Presentations will be approximately 15 minutes, with question and answer time to follow. There will be a resource center where people can ask questions. Intel is providing laptop computers for recording comments at the meetings.

Gunn asked CAT members to consider what level of participation they would prefer at the meetings. CAT members should inform Gunn if they would like to play an active, visible position and assist in staffing.

There will be a Spanish-speaking translator present during all hours of operation, and a sign language interpreter has been requested for the Ahwatukee meeting. A court reporter will be present for those who wish to have their comments entered into the record, but do not wish to provide handwritten comments or type in comments.

CAT Member Questions and Comments:

Question: When will we get right-of-way costs? **Response:** They will not be included at the public meeting, but will be included in an upcoming report.

Question: How will you compile the information received from the public? **Response:** We will provide a report with both verbatim comments and a summary. We will ask for attendees' ZIP codes so that we can sort comments in this manner. There are currently 2,500 comments in a database that can be sorted for reports. HDR has utilized these comments in preparing technical reports.

Evaluation Criteria

Gunn reviewed the process to determine evaluation criteria. At a previous meeting of the CAT, members were asked to identify aspects of an ideal freeway. They then grouped these items into and identified themes, which would ultimately become the criteria used in the evaluation process. She noted that a CAT member offered an explanation of criteria as, "a standard we'd like a freeway to meet, even if it is unlikely we could meet it."

The CAT will determine the criteria, and only the CAT may eliminate criteria. Gunn asked CAT members if they agreed with the approach for moving forward with criteria. There was agreement on this issue.

Gunn requested volunteers to write criteria for the previously identified themes and return criteria statements to her by November 28. These statements will be provided to the CAT at the December 1st meeting. Criteria assignments included:

- Cost – Don Jones
- Design – Clayton Danzeisen

- Community cohesion – Laurie Prendergast, David Lafferty
- Noise – Jim Stroger
- Ecological – Michelle Pulich-Stewart
- Quality of life effects – Doris French
- Air quality – Jim Buster
- Visual – Rock Argabright, Laurel Arndt
- Displacement – Kris Black
- Design obsolescence – Steve Boschen
- Operations – Dave Williams
- Alternative mode – Steve Boschen

CAT Member Questions and Comments:

Question: Does operations include safety? **Response:** Operations includes traffic flow.

Reply: We know ADOT will build a safe freeway, should we remove this as criteria?

Question: Which criteria take existing bike traffic into account? **Response:** CAT members commented that perhaps this would be considered a quality of life issue.

Respond to Written Comments/Questions:

Gunn noted that public comments which have been previously answered will receive a minimal response due to time constraints. All comments and questions will be included and shown as a part of the public input process. Comments and questions are recorded verbatim from forms received.

William Ramsay

Question: The City of Phoenix completed, around 2001, and at a cost of nearly \$60 Million, a water and sanitary sewer project along Pecos Road west of 24th St. There has been no mention of how ADOT will treat tax. Please elaborate on how the proposed South Mountain Loop, using Pecos Road as the eastern alignment, will affect the City of Phoenix's water system. **Response:** This is a repeat question. Further information will be available in the utility report.

David Folts, Concerned Families Along S. Mt. Loop 202

Question: In previous meetings ADOT & FHWA has sat about 15 feet away of their own table. Why are they now seated with the SMCAT members? Will the ADOT & FHWA people sitting at the SMCAT table be also voting on S. Mt. Loop along with the remainder of the Advisory Team? **Response:** They are sitting at the table so that they can better answer CAT questions. At the onset of the meeting, I asked CAT members if they would like ADOT and FHWA to return to the table and they agreed. ADOT and FHWA will not be at the table during the evaluation process.

Larry Lee, Foothills Mountain Ranch, Resident

Question: Just north of the church at 24th St. there is a dry well - - - this area floods. I do not see any accommodation for that flooding. **Response:** This site is not specifically included in the report

Question: Also, what impact will commercial business and an additional casino (to match the freeway traffic) have on noise, crime, pollution and general way of life for Ahwatukee? **Response:** We know of no plans for an additional casino or any commercial business development planned in this area.

Question: Will hazardous material travel on this highway? Why can't trucks use I-8 to avoid Phoenix? **Response:** This is a repeat question.

David Folts, Concerned Families Along S. Mt. Loop 202

Question: Will ADOT or FHWA do any form of underground radar mapping for Native Cultural Sights along S. Mt. Loop 202, also along the washes that will have increased flow as they travel away from S. Mt. Loop 202? Wouldn't it be better to locate and properly move the cultural finds beforehand than disturb it and try to deal with this after the fact? **Response:** This is a repeat question.

Question: I have heard that somewhere between 30 to 65 acres of land will be taken from S. Mt. Park for S. Mt. Loop 202. The most recent plans show how many acres are to be taken from S. Mt. Loop 202. **Response:** This information is in a forthcoming report.

Question: Why aren't the people of Laveen, Tolleson Ahwatukee and the other communities along S. Mt. Loop 202 given the same consideration when building highways through their community? This question specifically concerns the design of depressed highways in heavy residential areas. **Response:** We are looking at options for depressing the freeway in all communities where feasible.

Question: How many wells are in the path of S. Mt. Loop 202? How many wells will be redrilled to replace the wells that will be put out of service? Is part of SRP's recent well expansion happening because of the above-mentioned questions? **Response:** The number of wells is recorded in the technical reports, but I don't recall these numbers.

Question: Can ADOT show 2 artist renderings of the elevated interchanges with the sound and noise abatement techniques that will be used to lessen impact to the human environment? **Response:** This is a repeat question. We don't have a graphic for noise.

Question: Can ADOT show 3 (artist renderings) examples of what the elevated interchanges will look like along S. Mt. Loop 202? **Response:** This is a repeat question. There are some visuals coming and we will talk with ADOT about the renderings.

Question: In Nevada a school was relocated away from a highway that was going to have lanes added. This decision was made in federal court partly due to air standards within a few 100 feet of the highway. Does this court ruling have any affect on schools that will reside along S. Mt. Loop 202? **Response:** As stated earlier, this information was given to HDR and copies forwarded to ADOT and FHWA. These issues are being considered and further information will be included in the air report.

CAT Member Questions and Comments:

Comment: I would like more information in the reports, such as the fact that most of the wells in a certain area are monitoring wells, and therefore not of as great concern.

Comment: I am interested in the report about school site distance from the freeway.

Comment: I would like to see the maps with the red line showing the right-of-way.

Response: This will be coming with the revised design information.

Comment: The information we are now reviewing is what I want in detail. Now that we are finally getting this, we need to take time to properly review it.

Comment: We need to emphasize the times of the public meeting on the website. It is hard to find on the last page of the newsletter.

Gunn asked the group if they were receiving the information needed. Comments included:

- No, it is tough to review all of this in three days.
- No, the information is too simplistic.
- No, there is an overwhelming amount of information.
- We need more detail on mitigation specifics, and more information on what would be considered “hotspots.”
- It is tough to go through six reports. **Response:** We will send the reports as we receive them and won’t wait to send them together. We did not receive these reports until Monday.
- We need to see enough detail to decide if an issue is important.
- A high-level summary may work for some reports, but not others. (The CAT discussed which of the upcoming reports should include additional information. It was decided that all of the reports to be discussed at the December 1 meeting should include additional information.)

Gunn asked the group if they would like to start meetings earlier or end later. There was a preference to end meetings at 9 p.m. Gunn also emphasized the importance of avoid political remarks and only providing brief comments on issues not related to the topic of discussion.

CAT Member Comment Cards

Statements shown below are recorded verbatim from comment cards.

General:

- Too many requests for design details and specificity by CAT members is hampering any big picture advice that the CAT team could provide!
- Recently learned 85041 has highest number of child molesters (released from jail) concern by citizens of their ability to access other communities rapidly (because of freeway). Readdress that component – (citizen e-mailed me this info).
- Kudos to Laurel – Channel 8 -- We said a lot without saying much.

- Laveen needs to have an emergency escape route to the south. The two lane roads that were okay in the past are not adequate for the population there now and in the future.
- New subdivisions on 55th Ave north of Broadway.

Meeting Summary:

- The summaries are too simplistic and dumbed-down. They need to acknowledge the complexities of science without bias towards highway.
- Give details when mitigation is needed.
- Refer to my e-mail concerns on geotechnical data – please provide more detailed response on report findings.
- Channelization increases erosion downstream. This basic and important hydrological fact should be noted in the draft technical report for jurisdictional waters.
- Show typical sections of cut/fill sections with noise controls.
- Show approximate groundwater on profile.
- Channelization should not be a mitigation solution. Preservation thru elevated freeway design would allow for natural flow and wildlife migration.
- Geotechnical report – it says “minimize rock excavation.” This does not say not depressing the freeway.

Unanswered Questions:

- What is the latest on 32nd St? Has the city decided yet?
- Has GRIC thought about buying land from North Ridge South to protect cultural sites?
- Effects on homes of blasting if freeway on Pecos is depressed.
- Need a defined mitigation plan for Foothills well at 24th St. Also Lakewood wells.
- Why is Phoenix moving the interchange to 27th Ave.?
- Impact of removal of homes/condos to HOA income?
- Does everyone feel like we fully covered the last material? The agenda should take up where we left off – it’s too important to skip.
- You keep on alluding to “future design docs.” When will the CAT see those – isn’t that after the draft EIS is prepared? If so, then when do we (CAT) talk about next design docs?
- Will the Park ‘n Ride lot be expanded? Does ADOT have the land west of Park ‘n Ride up for auction now?
- When did ADOT buy the land between the two developments on the west side W55?
- Is there any historical or cultural finds during construction that would not be able to be moved?
- Items important. For public to see that were left out of tech. Report summary on floodplains: – better definition of floodplains=area where it floods – the area along a river or drainage subject to flooding. Boundaries of floodplains are determined by the river itself, not just the government.

- Why does the W71 alignment impact so many more acres of floodplain encroachment than the other alignments?
- How is the purchase price for land, homes, condos, etc. determined?
- Where does location of bike paths get evaluated? Pecos has major bike usage.
- Is there an elevated height that would allow buildings to be beneath a freeway?
- Man must study history or he is doomed to repeat it! Michael keeps asking for res. numbers! Scottsdale/101 article says 70,000 new jobs – 300,000 trips/day! In Res. land.
- Wells ADOT will buy – water credits go where?
- Put public meeting comments in context of who attends meetings and percentage of total population – is it new?

Adjourn:

Next CAT Meeting

The next CAT meeting will be held Thursday, December 1, 2005 at 5:30 p.m. at the Learning Center Meeting Hall, Komatke Center, in District Six.